

# Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press



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 A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

## WARNED AGAINST INTRIGUE

Harley Johnson, organizer for the Culinary Alliance, has up the "friendly union" and expresses his opinions in the following manner:

The latest "thing" in the variegated assortment of "company unions" has appeared in the city of Seattle under the title of the "Seattle Culinary Association."

This organization is a cheap imitation of the notorious Four L's, the pet wage-reducing agency of the Northwest lumber barons. It is composed of strikebreakers, stool pigeons, expelled union members and industrial misfits from nowhere. It is sponsored by the Seattle Caterers' Association, supervised by no less a person than Paul J. Jensen, secretary of the Caterers' Association and one of the chief flunkies of the Associated Industries. It is officered by one Cook Paulson, notorious scab, whose record of treachery dates back to the St. Germain Cafe and Bakery trouble; his most recent exploits being to serve as a strikebreaker at Rippe's and other unfair eating houses in the recent trouble between those houses and the Seattle culinary unions.

The hired help in the office of this boss-ridden "mutual admiration society" very modestly admits that it has a membership of between 40 and 50, and expresses the opinion that it will grow by leaps and bounds. They assure their dupes that this organization is going to lead them out of a wilderness of industrial turmoil and into a land of milk and honey. These poor unfortunates are told that they need a man with a lantern, and that his name is Paul J. Jensen. He is the Moses that will lead them the light.

The formation of an organization of this type was to be expected. The enemies of the workers fight them in the open only when they have to, but their chosen way is to extend the "velvet glove," the so-called "hand of fellowship," through the medium of "company unions." This "velvet glove" soon turns into the mailed fist, and the unthinking victims of it are crushed at will by the employers.

With the strikebreaker this does not matter. Always devoid of principle and destitute of honor, they are more at home when they are shoved down into the mire than when they are privileged to walk in the light of day with upstanding citizens of any community that is so unfortunate as to be infested with their miserable presence. This said "Seattle Culinary Association" now has he brazen effrontery to announce to the public the holding of its "first ball and buffet exhibit" to be held in the Masonic Temple on Thursday evening, February 23.

This organization and its activities deserve nothing but the united contempt of all right-thinking citizens.

Trade unionists, their friends and supporters and all other decent and self-respecting citizens, take notice! Do not be misled; do not connect the "Seattle Culinary Association," with offices at room 211 Melhorn building, 814-Second Ave., with the real, honest-to-goodness culinary unions of this city. Your own best interests and the best interests of the city of Seattle can best be served by completely repudiating this group of organized scabs known as the "Seattle Culinary Association." It is an industrial Judas and can serve no good purpose.

## OTTAWA TRADES COUNCIL ELECTIONS

While the greater part of the meeting was given over to the election of a new executive committee, the discussion on unemployment was the most interesting. In his report of the activities of the advisory committee on unemployment, said the city was face to face with a more serious unemployment situation than had existed during December and January. About 1,300 persons were receiving relief from private charities and a like number was being assisted by the city. He described the city hall social service department as "a crime" and a disgrace to the city. The jamming and crushing for relief was pitiful, and more satisfactory quarters should be laid out. The city would have to increase its assistance to the workless, and, if aid was not forthcoming, people would starve.

Delegate C. A. Hay considered that as there was taxation to pay for upkeep of the legislature and for the expenditures incurred during the war, there should also be taxation to help the unemployed. He sponsored a resolution calling upon the Dominion Government to take the issue and develop a proper plan to relieve the situation. He declared that "passing the buck" seemed to be the favorite pastime of the authorities. On the unemployment question the Provincial Government was almost solidly against the unionists, and the latter was waiting on the Municipal Government. In 1921, while the municipal authorities were waiting for the millennium before relieving distress. His resolution was adopted.

The report of the auditors showed that there was a balance of \$1,097.76, which included \$700 in Victory Bonds. The auditors found that Mr. Dan McCann, the retiring treasurer, had recklessly squandered the association's funds. Mr. Lodge's 25th report as chairman of the committee and corresponding secretary revealed that the membership of the association was mostly satisfactory.

Capt. J. A. P. Hayden, M.C., was re-elected president of the Allied Trades and Labor Council and thereupon stepped upon his second year in the chair and his third term. The election was held semi-annually.

The majority of the officers were elected by acclamation. Corresponding Secretary William Lodge being returned for his 26th consecutive term. The other officers are: Vice-President, A. A. Aubrey; Treasurer, M. Rod Plank; Recording Secretary, J. A. Johnson; sergeant at arms, J. Robertson; trustees, Controller Cameron, J. McCaffrey and M. Kavanagh; executive committee, Mrs. M. John-

## SOUTH WALES COALFIELD TROUBLE

By VERNON H. HARTSHORN, M.P.  
 (President of the South Wales Miners' Federation.)

I am quite certain that outside South Wales there exists nothing like a true conception of the tragedy which is being enacted in that coalfield. To understand it, you have first of all to know the social, commercial, and industrial characteristics of that populated area. Practically the whole of South Wales is dependent upon the export of the steam coal to foreign countries, and the very basis of the prosperity of all classes is the wage of the colliery workers. That basis has been practically destroyed, and though the miners themselves are, of course, the greatest sufferers, the devastation extends also to the professional and trading classes, and in addition it affects the financial stability of the whole of the local government system. The miners who are out of employment—they are many thousands, and the number is increasing—are a burden on the rates. The wage income of those at work is now substantially below the living basis, and that has practically cut off any profitable income for other classes. Shopkeepers are unable to do a business which will enable them to meet their standing charges and current accounts and are being hurried into bankruptcy. Professional men, particularly doctors, are in much the same position. Householders everywhere are being crushed under the increasing burden of the poor rates. The local authorities are harassed by being unable to collect their dues from many ratepayers. Boards of Guardians are piling up debts and are reaching the end of their financial resources. Some of them are threatening to cease to function at all. The whole social and economic system of South Wales is being steadily pushed towards bankruptcy, and if the South Wales Miners' Federation remained passive it would only hasten the process and bring the catastrophe inevitably and swiftly.

This tragedy, steadily developing before the eyes of every man who resides in South Wales, is not due to any action of the miners, but is the inevitable result of unrestricted "private enterprise" and insane competition among the coalowners. It is due entirely to the way in which the commercial side of the industry is now being conducted. The abandonment of Government control, and the forcing upon the miners of an agreement which gives them no protection in the form of a national pool or otherwise, placed the industry at the mercy of the most ruthless exploitation which aims at the securing of markets by a cheapness which is produced at the expense of the workers' wage fund and by a cut-throat competition between the capitalist. In the Welsh coalfield there are a few companies who are able to produce coal at a lower cost than their competitors. He circumscribes of the new agreement give them the opportunity of securing the foreign market for themselves by competition and cheapness, and they are at present running that policy of competition with the object of establishing a monopoly for themselves as quickly as possible. It is being done at the expense of the miners' wages, and is also increasing unemployment by driving other companies to the wall.

The agreement which was forced on the Welsh coalfield after the national stoppage enables the coalowners to keep the miner's wage at only 50 per cent. above the pre-war level. The companies who are responsible for the ruthless competition which is going on are working their scheme on this basis. They estimate the wage cost at this low level, then add the costs other than wages, and after making provision for profits for themselves they quite selling prices which are lower than the majority of the collieries of the coalfield can produce at. By the competition of those favourably-placed companies, the majority of the coalowners of South Wales are placed in a position in which they must either sell their property on the scrap-heap and their workmen into the ranks of the unemployed, or quote prices at the same low level as the companies who have already closed down. We have therefore for sixty-four firms, 45 per cent. of whom can keep going and several of whom make splendid profits, while 55 per cent. will have to close down.

This means that if no arrangement is come to between the owners themselves, scores of thousands of miners will be faced with unemployment as their employers will be unable to pay even the minimum wage. Some companies have already closed down, with the result that something like 30,000 miners are already unemployed in the coalfield. The majority of the owners have, however, continued to work so far. Most of them are working at a loss, using up their reserves, or carrying on with loans from the banks. Large numbers of men have



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seen given fourteen days' notice and are now working on day-to-day contracts. They may any day find themselves "on the road." Unless a common understanding is arrived at between the coalowners themselves and the sort of thing can only result in the financial collapse of all classes in the coalfield with the exception of a few companies who are the cause of the devastation. A prominent coalowner stated in an interview that the output from the collieries that do a single order of our foreign market would be lost if prices were 5s. per ton higher, and that unless action was taken in this direction half the collieries of the coalfield would be stopped in a few weeks, and most coalowners would share the fate which has befallen so many shipping companies.

During 1920 the average pit-head price of South Wales coal was approximately 55s. per ton. Much of our export coal was sold at double that price. This gave the Americans a chance. They captured much of our European market. But by August, 1921, our export prices had come down to 36s. 6d. At that price America could not compete. After August the Americans had, as a matter of fact, practically no foothold left in any country in Europe. We had driven them out. The following the coalowners and coalowners in other parts of Great Britain to capture such foreign trade as was available. Our volume of exports has constantly increased, but owing to the blind and misdirected competition the revenue from the trade has steadily declined. In November we sent 500,000 tons more coal out of the country than in August, and we received 250,000 for it. The miners are putting forth increased efforts and gaining nothing for it; in fact, their increased production brings in 1,500,000 less. It is sheer lunacy.

Coal is being sent out of the country below the cost of production, even though wages cost is based on starvation. The miners are now producing more coal in seven hours than they produced in eight in pre-war days, having regard to the number of men employed and the days worked. In July the quantity of Welsh coal available for sale was 2,357,800 tons. In November it was 3,825,000—an increase of 1,500,000 tons. But after paying costs other than wages, the receipts available for wages and profits were practically the same—£2,194,374 in July and £2,197,529 in November. The increase of 1,500,000 tons in the output meant an increase of only £3,000 in the fund available for wages and profits. This is the sort of frantic competition of private enterprise. The increased tonnage of 1,500,000 was given away to the foreigners by our competing coalowners at only 6d. per ton.

The Welsh miner has today a lower standard of living than fifty years past. He is also being bullied, driven, and humiliated by the coalowners, who think that the national stoppage smashed the Federation. In the days of the old sliding scale the South Wales Miners' Federation had to fight to prevent competing coalowners from forcing down selling prices to starvation level. They may have to fight again for the right to

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